LIGHT CAST ON ACTUAL SITUATION IN MEXICO BY EVENTS OF THE "TRAGIC WEEK"

Ambassador Wilson's Share in Huerta's Rise to Power—Indications That Madero Was Murdered to Avenge Killing of Ruiz—Sources of Weakness of Present Government

By STEPHEN BONSAL.

A GLANCE at the editorial comments on Mexican affairs in half a hundred prominent papers demonstrates very clearly how differently we view the situation, and, to my mind, how wofully misinformed we are, not only as to the disputed facts but as to the facts whose correctness are admitted by all parties to the controversy. A very distinguished gentleman in Washington told me yesterday that all the good men in Mexico were in the ranks of the Constitutionalists, and that all the blackguards and the brigands were with Huerta. It is a pity that this separation of the sheep from the goats, the good from the bad, has not been accomplished. It would simplify an otherwise complicated situation immensely. Now, as a matter of fact, while there are very excellent and worthy men aligned with the Constitutional forces, the only man among them who has done any fighting worth recording, except in what they call "Pasograms" on the border, is Don Pancho Villa, who is undoubtedly the most distinguished and bloodstained brigand that Mexico has produced since the French war.

To understand the situation as it is to-day, a situation in which we are so near to being involved, we must go back to the occurrences of what the Mexicans call the "tragic week" in last February. Then things were done whose shadows overhang the present situation.

To understand the situation by which we are confronted it is absolutely imperative to get a line on the personality of Gen. Huerta, the temporary master of it, and to grasp the psychology of the tragic week.

Huerta fought the Madero movement in the north with some ability and success. When Diaz resigned on May 25, 1911, he confided the protection of his departure from the capital, which was practically an escape, to Huerta, and Huerta acted loyally and stanchly in this matter. When Madero came into power, although in carrying out his idealistic programme he dismissed most of the volunteers who had fought for him and proceeded to rule the country according to the Sermon on the Mount, backed by the old convict battalions of Diaz, he did not give Huerta employment, but placed him on half pay. Only some months later, when the brigand Zapata became threatening and apparently a good man was needed to put him down, Madero bethought him of Huerta and placed him in charge of the forces in Morelos.

Huerta, an able soldier, was very successful, and Zapata was soon at the end of his resources, and then Madero intervened under circumstances which had never been made quite clear. From the moment, however, that Huerta was removed and again placed on half pay the campaign against the revolutionary brigands flagged.

Huerta lived in obscurity until Madero's Minister of War was signally defeated by Orozco, who had placed himself at the head of the new revolution in the north. When this unfortunate General committed suicide, Madero was at his wit's end. He might well have been. His military position was a desperate one. In this crisis he again called Huerta to him and in a very few weeks the forces of Orozco were scattered and this modern David of Chihuahua was secreted in some cave of the Sierra Madre.

Huerta had deserved well of Madero, but the ancient dislike to the man who had escorted the elder Diaz out of the country persisted, and Huerta was again detached from the troops he had led so brilliantly, placed on half pay and was told, in reference perhaps to his want of education, which borders on illiteracy, that he might profitably occupy his leisure time writing the story of his campaign.

Huerta now remains in obscurity until the dawn of the tragic week, when we see him again on the second day. Felix Diaz is in the citadel and Madero holds the palace. The plucky little President rides up San Francisco street on his white horse and Huerta rides by his side in a motor car with a drawn pistol ready to shoot down any one who opposes the President.

Huerta is now given his old command and 50 per cent. of his soldiers die in hopeless charges against the citadel. Huerta finds himself in a very uncomfortable position. Madero insists upon more attempts to capture the citadel and his soldiers, for twenty-four hours on the verge of mutiny, at last decline to charge.

Gen. Blanquet with 2,800 fresh troops comes up to the city, but he leaves his troops outside and stalks about the palace, a sinister, enigmatic figure. He looks over the survivors of Huerta's division and sees that they are beaten and mutinous. He sees that the men, women and children of the capital are almost unanimous in their opposition to the President, who was so far superior to them in many ways that they thought him crazy. He saw there was no limit to the devotion of the people to the cause of Diaz, whatever that may have been, and certainly they did not know. Hundreds of civilians and many women were killed in their attempts to reach the citadel with a few cartridges to replenish the almost exhausted store of the Felicistas.

Of the twelve thousand Americans and other foreigners in the city some, remarkably few under the circumstances, had been killed. Those who survived were bombarding their legations and the Foreign offices of their respective countries with appeals for succor before it was too late.

In the midst of much uncertainty only one thing seemed certain and assured, and this was that the existing precarious state of affairs could not long continue. There would have to be a change for the better or for the worse in a very few hours. The American Ambassador cabled to Washington for marines and bluejackets to be sent up from Vera Cruz, and the best opinion in Washington, of which Madero was informed, was that this step could not be delayed many hours.

President Taft in answer to a note of remonstrance from Madero sent a courteous and moderate reply. This, however, was interpreted in Mexico as but preparing and paving the way to armed intervention, and whatever may have been his motives, Madero gave the greatest publicity to these telegrams, and emphasized the point that all good Mexicans should prepare to repel an invasion. And at this juncture certain things were noticed in the railway yards at Vera Cruz which seemed to indicate that cars were being prepared and that the American marines and bluejackets were about to be entrained for the capital. Whether they were or were not is not quite clear, but the preparations which were made by the authorities along the lines to stop the passage of these troops were made in the open light of day and cannot be denied.

The almost unanimous opinion in the city of Mexico was to the effect that the psychological moment had arrived. In the callous talk of the street it was said, "Madero has lost the election and Felix Diaz has won it." It was further recognized almost unanimously that if Madero did not accept the verdict of the street battle that had gone against him the United States would intervene to save the city from further destruction and to safeguard her interests. Many thought that Madero persisted in his hopeless fight for the purpose of provoking intervention, and so in this way extricating himself from the dilemma in which he was placed.

Huerta and Blanquet had now got together and mutually strengthened each other in their refusals to bring their troops within range of the murderous fire from the citadel. They had both been brought into direct communication with the American Ambassador, as had also Felix Diaz. This had come about through the Ambassador's efforts to localize the struggle and to safeguard the lives and properties of all foreigners, efforts for which he has been very warmly thanked by all the colonies involved.

The American Ambassador of course knew of the coldness, to use a mild word, that had sprung up between Madero and his two ranking Generals. He knew, as did every other well informed person in Mexico city, that the only reason why Madero had not already deposed them from their positions was that he could not find any troops who would carry out his orders. And so it was that the pressure exerted from so many quarters to bring about a cessation of hostilities and to conjure, for the time at least, all danger of armed intervention brought Blanquet and Huerta and Felix Diaz together in the American Embassy, and the arrangement was reached which in a very few hours restored law and order in the capital. Unhappily one of the deplorable results of this arrangement was the murder of President Madero. There is no reason to think that at the time the arrangement was reached any one taking part in it contemplated the probability of this tragic incident.

Some time after the first attack on the palace, which was beaten back and in which Gen. Reyes lost his life, and while Felix Diaz was making himself snug and strong in the citadel, a certain Gen. Ruiz was killed in the patio of the palace. Several people have told me that they saw Gustavo Madero blow out Ruiz's brains with his own revolver. Ruiz may or may not have been traitor to Madero, but if he was no proofs of the fact have ever been brought to light and he was not judged by due process of law. As a retired army officer Ruiz was entitled to a court-martial, and as a member of Congress he was entitled to a trial by his peers.

The murder of Ruiz was most illegal, and with it began the era of illegality from which in the end the Maderos were the greatest sufferers. In the killing of Ruiz is to be found the provocation to, although by no means the justification of, the subsequent murder of President Madero.

I shall not go into the alleged shooting by President Madero of the two officers and the two soldiers who had been ordered by Huerta to inform the President that he had been deposed and must regard himself as a prisoner. I am not at all certain that the President acted in this energetic way. I have never seen or heard from any one who witnessed the episode, and the military conspiracy which developed a few days later is amply accounted for by the death of Ruiz.

Just before the end, and when it was apparent that the army was leaving Madero and that an arrangement between the military chiefs was being consummated, between thirty-five and forty Senators called upon Madero in the palace and besought him in the name of their common country to see the situation as it was and to resign.

Madero throughout the preceding days had behaved with dignity and had exhibited admirable courage, but now he was at the end of his tether and he drove the Senators from his presence with passionate, menacing words. Out in the patio the furious Senators held a meeting and deposed the President unanimously. They had no constitutional right to do this, of course. The formalities of a legal impeachment, which was one of their rights, were not and could not be observed under the circumstances, but their outspoken denunciations of Madero as they left the palace and the statements which they made to the populace as they perorated in the streets to the effect that American intervention was inevitable owing to Madero's obstinacy had a tremendous influence upon all who heard them and helped to seal the President's fate.

The President is now disarmed, a prisoner in the palace where recently he had made a noble attempt to deal with a desperate situation, and there are few so decent as to treat him with the honors and the consideration which he personally at least, whatever may have been the crimes and misdemeanors of some of the men who surrounded him, had most certainly deserved. The American Ambassador is hailed on all sides as the man who had saved the situation. The members of the American and foreign colonies almost worship him as the pilot who weathered the storm and brought their endangered lives once again into the haven of legality. And by the Mexicans the American Ambassador is acclaimed with almost the same unanimity as the man who had helped very materially in once again banishing the spectre of intervention.

Gen. Huerta gave the American Ambassador every assurance that could be asked that Madero would be protected from his enemies; he also delivered the cablegrams of President Taft and the first assurances were repeated. I have talked very freely with the enemies of Gen. Huerta who should be informed of what was brewing at this time. I have only met one or two who are of the opinion that Madero was doomed from the moment of his fall, and that it was never intended that he should leave the country or even the city. The great majority of the best informed think that Huerta only wanted to get rid of an embarrassing prisoner.

The Governor of Vera Cruz and the General commanding the forces in that district telegraphed Gen. Huerta that if Madero arrived in their district he would be received as President of the republic.

Late on this evening it was given out at the palace that the President would not be allowed to depart until he had answered before a committee of Congress certain charges that were even then being drawn up. One of these charges was to the effect that Madero had acquiesced in if he had not connived at the murder of Ruiz. Following now the sequence of events and nearing the last act in the tragedy we come to the transfer of Madero and Pino Suarez, the Vice-President, from the palace to the penitentiary.

Mrs. Madero has been entirely misled in the statement which she has been induced to publish in the United States, and there are a hundred reliable witnesses who can testify that the two prisoners were not murdered in their rooms but left the palace alive and well. On the journey there was also no serious attempt at a rescue which would have justified the guards in fighting. As a matter of fact the cortege was set upon by friends of Ruiz and of other officers who had been severely treated, as they thought, by Madero, and the two prisoners were killed, neither the officer of the transfer party nor the guards making any effort to defend them.

At the direct instance of the United States Government, acting through our Ambassador, Huerta appointed a commission to investigate the circumstances under which the prisoners met their death. This report was duly turned over to Huerta and it was by him suppressed. So far as I know no one has ever seen the text of the report. A few weeks later the officer in charge of the prisoners when their fate overtook them was promoted, and this act is generally regarded as making Huerta an accessory to the murder, at least after the fact. The Huerta people regard the incident as too unimportant to talk about, but when they do talk they say that the promotion was given because the officer in question had done the best he could in a difficult situation.

We would be entirely misjudging political morals, at least in the political class in Mexico, if we came to the conclusion that the manner in which Madero met his death exerts a powerful influence on the situation in our sister republic to-day. Huerta had personal knowledge of many similar things that happened while the elder Diaz was in supreme power. He knew from the men of the last generation what Juarez had done and what Santa Anna had done when an inconvenient life stood athwart his plans. He knew that until the present unarmed public opinion had been a negligible quantity in all the Mexican revolutions and civic commotions, and he preferred to affront the public opinion of the outside world rather than incur the hostility of the four or five subordinate officers of the army who wreaked their vengeance upon Madero. So he put the damaging report in his pocket.

Six months and more have elapsed since the last of these events occurred and Huerta remains in supreme control of the greater and as it would appear of a constantly increasing proportion of the country. But he knows he cannot long survive, because economically Mexico is being strangled and the fiat has gone forth that no more funds can be obtained by a Government to which the recognition and the sanction of the United States has been refused. If we bear these antecedent facts in mind a clear survey of the resulting conditions of the present day situation will not be difficult to obtain.

President Victoriano Huerta.

"CHARLOTTE BRONTE'S TRAGEDY" REVEALED IN HER LETTERS TO PROF. HEGER

Four Remarkable Human Documents Just Published in London Describe Her Sentiments Toward Her Former Teacher and Refute Suspicions Concerning Her Relations With Him.

Charlotte Bronte.

IN a cable despatch THE SUN has already given the substance of the four letters in which Charlotte Bronte discloses what has been referred to as her secret or her tragedy. They were written to Prof. Constantin Heger, whose school at Brussels she attended. Prof. Heger was the original of the M. Paul Emanuel in "Villette," and that novel is believed to be largely a record of Miss Bronte's own experiences.

The letters were presented to the British Museum by Dr. Paul Heger of Brussels, son of Prof. Constantin Heger, and have just been published in the London *Times*. They were written in French and translations were supplied by M. H. Spielmann, the critic. Dr. Heger consented to their publication in order that through the revelation of what has been termed "Charlotte Bronte's Secret" and "The Tragedy of Charlotte Bronte" the memory of both parties to this apparently unilateral correspondence may be cleared of the suspicions which in certain quarters have been hinted at, and even, by some writers, maintained.

Dr. Heger says that "there is nothing in these letters which is not entirely honorable to their author, as to him to whom they are addressed. It is better to lay bare the very innocent mystery than to let it be supposed that there is anything to hide. I hope that the publication of these letters will bring to an end a legend which has never had real existence in fact; I hope so—but legends are more tenacious of life than simple reality."

And Mr. Spielmann points out that "so little real importance did the recipient apparently attach to these letters, so little did he seem to recognize the true ring of their piteous appeal (except righteously, no doubt, to reprove the writer as 'exaltee') that in the margin of the last he has jotted odd pencil notes; still legible on it are the name and address of a Brussels shoemaker."

The first letter was written July 24, 1844. In part it says:

"I am very pleased that the school year is nearly over and that the holidays are approaching—I am pleased on your account, Monsieur—for I am told that you are working too hard and that your health has suffered somewhat in consequence. For that reason I refrain from uttering a single complaint for your long silence—I would rather remain six months without receiving news from you than add one grain to the weight, already too heavy, which overwhelms you. • • •

"Ah, Monsieur! I once wrote you a letter that was less than reasonable, because sorrow was at my heart; but I shall do so no more. I shall try to be selfish no longer; and even while I look upon your letters as one of the greatest felicities known to me I shall await the receipt of them in patience until it pleases you and suits you to send me any. Meanwhile I may well send you a little letter from time to time; you have authorized me to do so.

"I greatly fear that I shall forget French, for I am firmly convinced that I shall see you again some day—I know not how or when—but it must be, for I wish it so much, and then I should not wish to remain dumb before you—it would be too sad to see you and not be able to speak to you. To avoid such a misfortune I learn every day by heart a half a page of French from a book written in familiar style; and I take pleasure in learning this lesson, Monsieur. As I pronounce the French words it seems to me as if I were chatting with you.

"I have just been offered a situation as first governess in a large school in Manchester with a salary of £100 (i. e., 2,500 francs) per annum. I cannot accept it, for in accepting it I should have to leave my father, and that I cannot do." Instead she has a plan of taking five or six children as boarders in the vicarage. She would devote herself to their education. She adds:

"Emily does not care much for teaching, but she would look after the housekeeping, and although something of a recluse she is too good hearted not to do all she could for the well being of the children. Moreover, she is very generous, and as for order, economy, strictness—and diligent work—all of them things very essential in a school—I willingly take that upon myself.

"That, Monsieur, is my plan, which I have already explained to my father and which he approves. It only remains to find the pupils—rather a difficult thing—for we live rather far from towns, and one does not greatly care about crossing the hills which form, as it were, a barrier around us. • • • There is nothing I fear so much as idleness, the want of occupation, inactivity, the lethargy of the faculties; when the body is idle the spirit suffers painfully.

"I should not know this lethargy if I could write. Formerly I passed whole days and weeks and months in writing, not wholly without result, for Shelley and Coleridge—two of our best authors, to whom I sent certain manuscripts—were good enough to express their approval; but now my sight is too weak to write. Were I to write much I should become blind.

"This weakness of sight is a terrible hindrance to me. Otherwise do you know what I should do, Monsieur? I should write a book and I should dedicate it to my literature master—to the only master I ever had—to you, Monsieur. • • • But that cannot be—it is not to be thought of. The career of letters is closed to me—only that of teaching is open."

In a postscript, she says:

"I have not begged you to write to me soon as I fear to importune you—but you are too kind to forget that I wish it all the same—yes, I wish it greatly. Enough; after all, do as you wish, Monsieur. If, then, I received a letter and if I thought that you had written it out of pity—I should feel deeply wounded.

"It seems that Mrs. Wheelwright is going to Paris before going to Brussels, but she will post my letter at Boulogne. Once more, good-by, Monsieur; it hurts me to say good-by even in a letter. Oh, it is certain that I shall see you again one day—it must be so—for as soon as I shall have earned enough money to go to Brussels I shall go there—and I shall see you again if only for a moment."

The second letter was written October 24, 1844. It is as follows:

"Monsieur:

"I am in high glee this morning—and that has rarely happened to me these last two years. It is because a gentleman of my acquaintance is going to Brussels and has offered to take charge of a letter for you—which letter he will deliver to you himself, or else, his sister, so that I shall be certain that you have received it.

"I am not going to write a long letter, in the first place, I have not the time—it must leave at once; and then I am afraid of worrying you. I would only ask of you if you heard from me at the beginning of May and again in the month of August? For six months I have been awaiting a letter from Monsieur—six months waiting is very long, you know! However, I do not complain and I shall be richly rewarded for a little sorrow if you will now write a letter and give it to this gentleman—or to his sister—who will hand it to me without fail.

"I shall be satisfied with the letter however brief it be—only do not forget to tell me of your health, Monsieur, and how Madame and the children are, and the governesses and pupils.

"My father and my sister send you their respects. My father's infirmity increases little by little. Nevertheless he is not yet entirely blind. My sisters are well, but my poor brother is still ill.

"Farewell, Monsieur; I am depending on soon having your news. The idea delights me, for the remembrance of your kindnesses will never fade from my memory, and as long as that remembrance endures the respect with which it has inspired me will endure likewise. Your very devoted pupil,

"C. BRONTE.

"I have just had bound all the books you gave me when I was at Brussels. I take delight in contemplating them; they make quite a little library. To begin with, there are the complete works of Bernardin de St. Pierre—the Pensees de Pascal—a book of poetry, two German books—and worth all the rest two discourses of Monsieur le Professeur Heger, delivered at the distribution of prizes at the Athenee Royal.

"Octh. 24th, 1844."

The third letter of the series begins abruptly:

"Mr. Taylor has returned. I asked him if he had a letter for me. 'No, nothing.' 'Patience,' said I, 'his sister will be here soon.' Miss Taylor has returned. 'I have nothing for you from Monsieur Heger,' says she; 'neither letter nor message.'

"Having realized the meaning of these words, I said to myself what I should say to another similarly placed. 'You must be resigned, and above all do not grieve at a misfortune which you have not deserved.' I strove to restrain my tears, to utter no complaint.

"But when one does not complain, when one seeks to dominate oneself with a tyrant's grip, the faculties start into rebellion and one pays for external calm with an internal struggle that is almost unbearable.

"Day and night I find neither rest nor peace. If I sleep I am disturbed by tormenting dreams in which I see you, always severe, always grave, always incensed against me.

"Forgive me then, Monsieur, if I accept the course of writing to you again. How can I endure life if I make no effort to ease its sufferings?

"I know that you will be irritated when you read this letter. You will say once more that I am hysterical (or neurotic)—that I have black thoughts, &c. So be it, Monsieur; I do not seek to justify myself; I submit to every sort of reproach. All I know is, that I cannot, that I will not, resign myself to lose wholly the friendship of my master. I would rather suffer the greatest physical pain than always have my heart lacerated by smarting regrets. If my master withdraws his friendship from me entirely I shall be altogether without hope; if he gives me a little—just a little—I shall be satisfied—happy; I shall have a reason for living on, for working.

"Monsieur, the poor have not need of much to sustain them—they ask only for the crumbs that fall from the rich men's table. But if they are refused the crumbs they die of hunger. Nor do I, either, need much affection from those I love. I should not know what to do with a friendship entire and complete—I am not used to it. But you showed me of yore a little interest, when

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